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Web-based program helps increase Bay Area nursing student enrollment

Study reveals clinical placement system's impact on addressing nursing shortage

SACRAMENTO—September 10, 2009—A Web-based system established to address the state's nursing shortage has helped spur a 47 percent increase in Bay Area nursing student enrollment over the past five years, according to an independent study recently completed.

The system, called the Centralized Clinical Placement System (CCPS), helped facilitate between 15.3 and 20.6 percent of the increase in enrollment over the five-year period. CCPS is an online tool intended to streamline the placement of nursing students into clinical rotations at local hospitals and medical facilities and expose untapped openings, ultimately allowing programs to increase their enrollment.

The study was commissioned by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, which also funded the development of CCPS in 2004 by the Foundation for California Community Colleges and California Institute for Nursing and Health Care. The goal of the study was to evaluate the impact of CCPS on educational capacity in the San Francisco Bay Area, including an assessment of CCPS user satisfaction and whether the system has had an impact on clinical placement slots and nursing student enrollment.

CCPS is part of the Nursing Resource Center, a suite of online tools that includes CCPS and the Centralized Faculty Resource Center (CFRC), which helps place nursing faculty in schools and was also part of the study. The objective of the Nursing Resource Center is to maximize nursing education capacity within a specific region, as well as identify new opportunities for relationships between hospitals and nursing schools in that region.

The study was conducted by the Center for the Health Professions and School of Nursing at the University of California, San Francisco, and took three years to complete. Research methods included interviews with nursing programs, clinical sites and faculty applicants, along with the analysis and review of data from sources such as CCPS, the California Board of Registered Nursing Annual Schools Report, and the Chief Nursing Officers Survey.

“Through our research, we found that nursing schools using CCPS thought the system, in combination with other efforts, has helped facilitate their program expansion. In addition, there has been an increase in the percentage of hospitals that take students during off-hours and weekends, which adds greater flexibility for nursing students needing clinical rotations,” said Renae Waneka, a research analyst with the Center for the Health Professions who co-authored the study.

CCPS allows clinical agencies, such as hospitals, to review and respond to requests for placement of nursing students from colleges in a standard format and manage a single schedule for all placements, rather than dealing with the placement of students in a piecemeal fashion. On the opposite end, it helps schools place students more efficiently and helps them discover untapped sites for clinical placements by viewing all available opportunities at local hospitals on one easy-to-use site.

“We are extremely pleased to see that this research demonstrates CCPS is an effective tool for helping to address the nursing shortage by increasing clinical education opportunities for nurses,” said Marybeth Sharpe, PhD, Initiative Lead for the Betty Irene Moore Nursing Initiative at the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

The study findings will help the partnering agencies determine necessary improvements moving forward. “The study has not only illuminated areas that are working, but has also provided useful suggestions for how we can continue to improve these tools to provide greater benefit to participating schools and hospitals,” said Paul Lanning, Ed.D, President and CEO of the Foundation for California Community Colleges. “In 2008 alone, numerous system enhancements were incorporated based on user feedback. We will take the feedback provided in this study just as seriously.”

The Bay Area Nursing Resource Center was launched in May 2005 and within the first year was in use by over 55 hospitals and over 30 nursing schools. Since then, that number has grown to 65 hospitals and 46 nursing schools. The NRC system has also since expanded to markets throughout the state and nation, including Los Angeles, Bakersfield, Cincinnati, Houston, Corpus Christie, and Florida. The system is developed, hosted and supported by the Foundation for California Community Colleges, the official nonprofit supporting the California Community Colleges, which educate 70 percent of California's new registered nurses each year.

The complete study, along with additional details about the Nursing Resource Center and its components, are available at www.NursingResourceCenter.org.

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About the Foundation for California Community Colleges

The Foundation for California Community Colleges is the official foundation to the California Community Colleges' Board of Governors, Chancellor, and System Office. The Foundation's mission is to benefit, support, and enhance the missions of the California Community College system, the largest higher education system in the nation. Incorporated in 1998, the Foundation works with Community Colleges and partner organizations to manage donations, grants, programs, and services that drive excellence in education while saving millions of dollars for colleges each year. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit corporation and receives no direct state or public support. For more information, visit www.foundationccc.org.

About the California Institute for Nursing and Health Care (CINHC)

A statewide non-profit, non-partisan organization, CINHC is developing solutions to California's nurse shortage by partnering with nursing associations, educational institutions, hospital and health systems, foundations, policy leaders, health care companies, consumers and individual nurses. More information is available at www.cinhc.org.

About the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

The Foundation is dedicated to advancing environmental conservation and cutting-edge scientific research around the world, as well as helping to improve quality of life in the San Francisco Bay Area – Gordon and Betty Moore's home for more than 70 years. For more information, visit www.moore.org.